



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF VICTIM ADVOCATE  
505 HUDSON STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

Michelle S. Cruz, Esq.  
State Victim Advocate

Testimony of Michelle Cruz, Esq., State Victim Advocate  
Judiciary Committee  
Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Michelle Cruz and I am the Victim Advocate for the State of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of:

**Raised Senate Bill No. 237, An Act Concerning the Statute of Limitations for Crimes Associated with Homicide**

The surviving family members of a homicide victim face many difficult challenges as they cope with the sudden, traumatic loss of a loved one. In cases where law enforcement is not able to clearly and definitively identify the individual(s) responsible for the homicide, the surviving victims remain in a suspended state of limbo. Each day, month and year that passes, without answers, not only causes more harm to the victim, but also reduces the chances of solving the homicide.

Unfortunately there are a number of homicide crimes that go or will go unsolved and unpunished each year. In part, some due to the actions of others to prevent the offender from being detected by law enforcement. Those individuals may never face the consequence of a crime because of a statute of limitations. One reason for this is that the person responsible for the homicide, or others on their behalf, will hinder the investigation by providing false statements to law enforcement, tamper with or alter evidence and/or intentionally prevent the identity of the person responsible for committing the homicide to become known to law enforcement. Although the prosecution of persons accused of committing crimes of homicide are not subject to a statute of limitations, persons who intentionally cause a delay in the prosecution of such individuals may escape prosecution and not be held accountable for their role in the homicide.

As technology is advanced, such as DNA, those cases classified as "cold cases" now have a very good chance of being solved. A person who intentionally contributed to a delay in the investigation of a homicide should be held accountable for their actions. I urge the committee to support the proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle S." followed by a stylized flourish.

Michelle Cruz, Esq.  
State Victim Advocate